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THE MONARCH  
AND OTHER POEMS



BY

JOHN H. FLAGG



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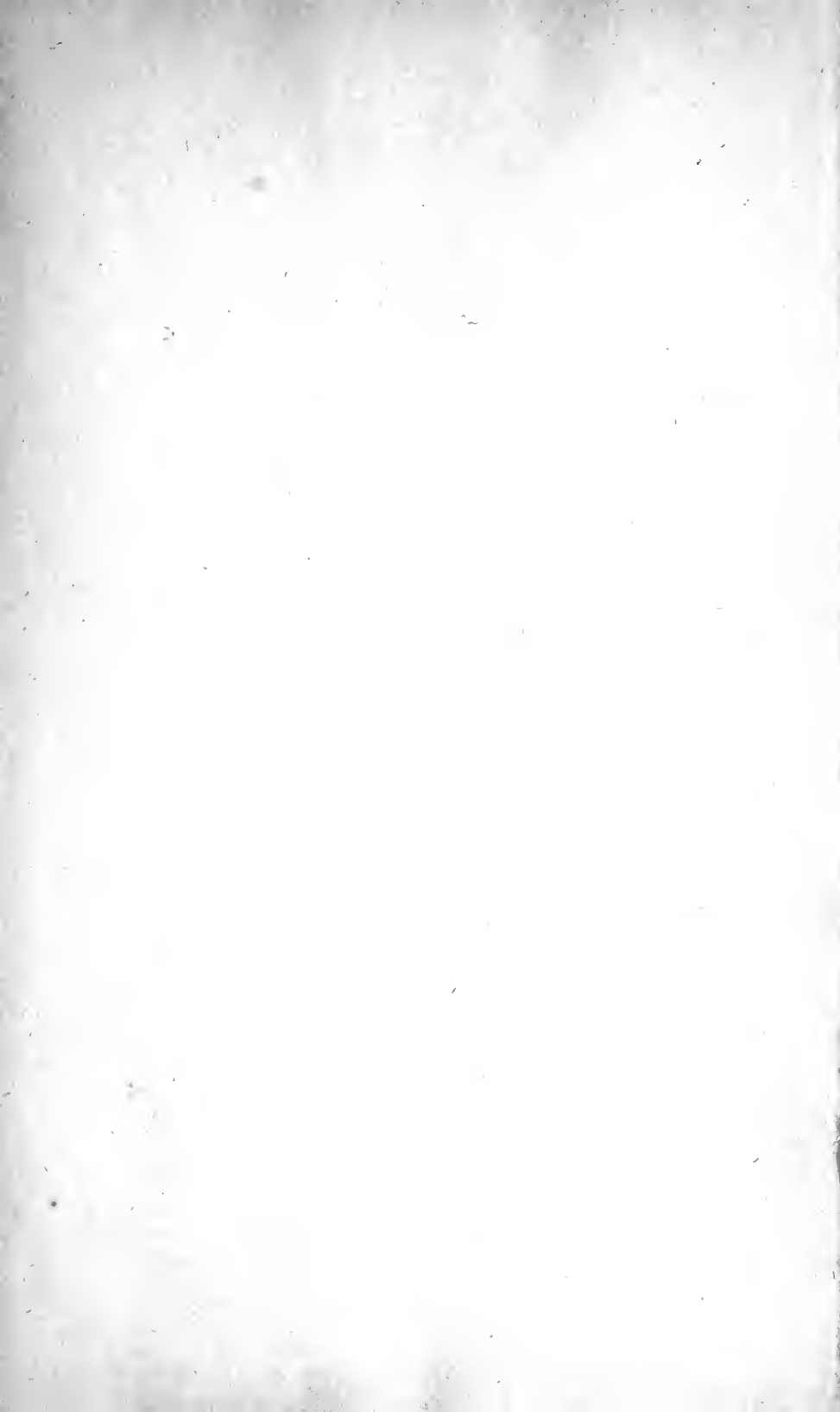
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# THE MONARCH

## AND OTHER POEMS

BY

JOHN H. FLAGG



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*To Edward Quintard, whose skillful  
service as a physician and unfailing devotion  
as a friend have made me a double debtor,  
I inscribe these pages in lasting gratitude.*

*J. H. F.*

C. J.

C. J.



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## POEMS



## THE MONARCH.

---



BEHOLD!—The Monarch, Time, am I,  
Whom none shall balk nor dare deny!  
I will supreme in every clime

Where man would make my deeds a crime,  
And thrones that rule mankind through awe,  
To me decree no binding law!

Before a mortal crown was worn

Or pompous king or queen was born  
My sceptre swung from every throne—

My mandates rang from zone to zone.

My mission here is to despoil—  
To do it well, my only toil;—  
Man's ceaseless sob and pleading prayer  
To my dull ear no wailings bear.  
I work alone, and have no friend  
To praise, encourage or commend.  
With muffled feet I stride ahead  
And make no sound where'er I tread.  
As youth and health to me belong,  
I need no rest to keep me strong,  
And weary not by day nor year  
In loading death upon my bier,  
Nor reaching down into the grave  
To turn to dust what Nature gave.

Behold my work already done  
With yet my purpose scarce begun!—  
Where tropic suns now smite the earth  
Gleamed icebergs once, of ponderous girth;

Where ocean billows once leapt high  
Now Chimborazo cleaves the sky;  
Where primal Rome was hewn and reared  
Five Romes in turn have disappeared;  
Where Karnak raised her mighty walls  
The sluggish reptile creeps and crawls;  
Where Charthage stood and held her sway  
Wild forest beasts pursue their prey.

The lord of skies and seas and lands,  
I spare no work of human hands!—  
The sculptured forms by genius wrought;  
The monuments where heroes fought;  
The chiselled altars hewn from stone;  
The palaces where kings are grown;  
Earth's navies on the salted seas;  
The mitred pope on bended knees;  
The fanes upreared by pious hands;  
The pyramids on Egypt's sands;

Man's castles and his rustic homes;  
His temples with their gilded domes;  
His campaniles and his towers  
Where tolls the knell of passing hours;  
His treasures, trophies, battle-won;  
His states and empires scarce begun—  
Alike shall perish with the rest  
And turn to dust at my behest!

Yet mark besides what is to be  
And naught can frustrate my decree!—  
Proud Aetna's flames shall cease to burn  
And glaciers melt and freeze in turn;  
To nebulae I'll change the earth  
And pay back Nature's debt with dearth:—  
I'll pluck the planets from the skies  
(Which dazzle now man's wondering eyes)  
And then blot out the blazing sun  
And turn to vapor whence begun:—  
Then, midst the waste, behold my throne—  
A Monarch still, though left alone!

## THE BROOK.

---



I AM the brook, the nimble brook,  
Born in my tranquil, shaded nook  
Mid solemn hills and mountain peaks  
Where nature every language speaks.

Unlike the footed beasts of earth—  
So frail and helpless at their birth—  
I straightway creep, then stride, then run,  
To greet my first uprising sun.

On, on I rush with quickened pace  
And force my way from place to place,  
While lesser brooklets eager flow  
To swell my volume as I go.

The alders nod when I pass by;  
The reeds and rushes courtesy;  
And where the lilies rise and float  
I suck rare nectar from each throat.

When I grow weary or depressed  
I loiter at my pools to rest,  
Then hurry on with doubled haste  
To catch the hours allowed to waste.



When lo, I'm throttled as I wend  
And harnessed like a beast to lend  
My help to man's dependent hand  
Which halts me with its rude command.

Thus forced, I tread man's endless wheel;  
I grind his grist and mould his steel;  
His looms I work with faithful hand,  
And all his varied arts expand.

But soon I break from this embrace  
And hasten from the servile place,  
But grieve to find I've grown ten fold  
Since down the mountain-side I bowled.

At length I wake, as from a dream,  
To find myself a tidal stream  
That brings rank sea-salt to my tongue,  
A taste unknown when I was young.

And now I hear the ocean roar  
And tremble at my fate in store;  
I scent his breath and quail with awe,  
But helpless, yield to Nature's law;—

To Nature's law I bow content,  
That law which none can circumvent;  
The hand that lifts the oceans' tide  
Will reach to me and then abide!

WILLIAM McKINLEY.

---



TRUE to each trust and best when trusted most, —  
For Country first, though facing peace or war, —  
Making, in peace, its greatness greater still,

While yet in war his young but manly breast

On many a blood-soaked, death-strewn battle-field  
Was bared to shield a Nation's heart from harm.

This man of God, born fit to lead the way  
And lift mankind to nobler, loftier heights,

Alas! by Anarch's poisoned fang lies slain!  
And when he fell, lo, in remotest lands

Were mingled tears and solemn, tolling bells  
Proclaiming anguish equal to our own.

That blameless life, — that apt, sagacious tongue,  
Though hushed on earth forevermore, yet speak

As with an angel's trumpet and declare  
The better life is lingering with us still.

*September, 1901.*

## ON A DEW DROP.

---



WHAT is that chaste, that sparkling thing,  
Which to the rose at dawn  
doth cling,  
And nestled near its throbbing breast  
Plays ardent lover while a guest?

'Tis but a tear of weeping night —  
The weeping of a glad delight —  
Till startled by obtruding day  
Night, fearing capture, steals away.

## CHILDHOOD'S HOME.

---



DREAMED of busy childhood days,  
where sunshine ever clung,  
Back in my country home again

when this old heart was young;  
Through one brief hour of ecstasy, when every  
thought was bliss,  
With manhood's cares forsaken, what spell could  
be like this?

My ravished eyes sought every place—each  
object they once knew—  
With nothing changed in all these years and  
nothing added new;  
Transfixed I stood amid the scenes so long ob-  
scured from sight,  
As through the windows shone, I thought, a  
consecrated light.

I saw the row of flower-pots upon the window-  
sill,  
Wherein grew sweet geraniums that drooped  
with thirst until  
At sunset mother sprinkled them, and fondled  
each with care:—  
Methought, to gladden my return, their frag-  
rance was still there.

I saw the old melodeon whose notes I'd  
often heard  
Commingled with my mother's voice that hal-  
lowed every word;  
This, long since, joined the choir unseen in an-  
thems sung on high:—  
I sometimes think I hear it now through cloud-  
rifts in the sky.

In yonder nook—its 'customed place—stood  
father's old oak chair—  
Descended from ancestral lines—a gift from heir  
to heir;—  
As if to stay each stranger hand and shield it from  
all harm,  
A spider here had spun her web outstretched from  
arm to arm.

How often here I'd clambered to my father's  
waiting knee,  
To hear his thrilling stories told of deeds on land  
and sea,—  
Of Indian scalpers on the plains,—of pirates fierce  
and bold,—  
Of hunters' daring for wild beasts—and others  
search for gold.

Here was the book-case just as when, at pleasant  
evening time,  
I searched the well-worn volumes through for  
picture or for rhyme :  
For just plain books I did not care,—they baffled  
me with lore—  
Whatever one I tried to read I soon declared a  
bore.



There hung the old gilt mirror still, near to the  
parlor door,  
Where I'd intently gazed upon my new clothes  
from the store,  
And once had donned my brother's suit when to  
the glass I ran,  
To see how big and brave I'd look when I be-  
came a man.

There stood the same old kitchen stove, where  
many a nipping day,  
I'd held my freezing, outstretched hands when I  
came in from play;  
This good old friend had one grave fault—it  
burned out wood so fast—  
I lugged it in incessantly, until the cold months  
passed.

Its glowing sides my mother sought in patient  
willing toil,  
To make the good things for us all that careless  
cooks might spoil;  
She always baked me special pies and cookies,  
cakes, galore,  
And yet I claimed I grew so fast I needed  
just one more.

There peered the old remorseless clock that  
watched me argus-eyed,  
And when my bed-time hour arrived my  
patience oft had tried;  
'Twas then I claimed it ran too fast, while  
mother claimed 'twas slow;—  
Whatever my contention was I always had to  
go—

Go to my far-off attic bed when mother led  
the way,  
Whose candle and assuring words my fears did  
not allay;—  
She bore away the candle, after kissing me  
good-night, .  
But all through life I've felt that kiss and seen  
that vanished light.

There was the same old ample shelf that father  
called his own,  
Where he kept Bible, pipe and pen and all  
odd things were thrown;  
Beneath it, hung the almanac, that said in  
letters bold,  
“*About this time look out for squalls*”—which  
prophecy controlled.

I heard the rattling Autumn hail upon the  
window-pane,  
Forewarning that dread Winter days were steal-  
ing back again;  
Thanksgiving was approaching, too,—that boon  
from old Cape Cod,—  
Ordained by pious Pilgrim sires, in gratefulness  
to God.

I whistled then for dear “old Jack,” who hasten-  
ed to my side,—  
That noble, true, confiding friend—my comrade  
and my pride;  
Where’er I strayed he too must go,—I always  
felt his touch,—  
’Twas hard to call him but a brute, he knew  
and felt so much.

We wandered then down to the brook beyond  
our sugar-place,  
Where often at the old mill-hole I'd stood and  
bobbed for dace,  
And once a big trout took my bait—I quivered  
with delight—  
Until my line caught on a snag quite hidden  
from my sight.

Throughout that Summer, day by day, at  
dawn, at noon, at eve,  
I vainly angled for that trout more hours than  
you'd believe;  
But while he thus outwitted me, I learned  
from Nature's book,  
That boys can never be true boys unless they  
haunt some brook.

I woke to find these vanished scenes of child-  
hood's cherished hours  
A dream of what they once had been, and only  
perished flowers;  
Yet glad and grateful e'en for this, I search  
through memory's path  
And pluck with joy each perfumed leaf from  
Dreamland's aftermath.

## CAPTIVITY.

---



HY tender, thoughtful, earnest eyes—  
Within their tranquil depths there lies  
A magic power, unknown to thee,  
That chains me in captivity.

The morning light the brighter grows  
Wherever their effulgence glows,  
And e'en at night their potent ray  
Converts the darkness into day.

So would my pathway through each year  
Of life's contending hope and fear,  
Be made one blissful, hallowed spell,  
Should such supernal light there dwell.

## THE VOICE OF THE ROSE.

---



NCE happy I, when lone I dwelt,  
And ne'er a stranger's hand  
I felt, —

The hedge-row, lane and upland mine,  
Companioned with the herds and kine.

I then knew well each sister's face,  
Her gentle smile and growing grace,  
While blooming there through summers long  
With honied bees and birds of song.



But oft I've seen, with trembling fear,  
Some idle school-boy loitering near  
To pluck me in my morning pride,  
When I my blushing face would hide.

Through days we've watched, and each in turn,  
For moving bush, or bending fern,  
To warn against intrusions there,  
That we our humble lives might spare.

While thorns that guarded each frail flower,  
True to their trust, enforced their power,  
Yet still some ruthless hand each day  
Would pluck and bear our best away,—

Away perchance to stifling air  
To pour reluctant fragrance there,  
Unnoticed by the boisterous throng  
Whose wine provokes their maudlin song;—

Or where in shame and worse despair  
'Twere tangled in some harlot's hair,  
And through the long and hideous night  
Would languish, fade and die affright;—

Or where Love's gentle voice is heard—  
Mute witness to each spoken word—  
Where his impassioned vows reveal  
The rapture which young lovers feel;—

Or where it decks the trembling bride  
    When kneeling at the altar-side;  
Or to her pathway where 'twould lend  
    A fragrant Springtime to the end.

Or where the broken-hearted prays  
    When fade life's gorgeous sunset rays,  
With speechless lips and reverent head  
    Its incense there is gladly shed;—

And we an equal homage yield  
    To those whose faults were not concealed;—  
With joy we linger at the grave  
    Which man condemned, but God forgave.”

Thus spoke the lowly-hearted rose  
And told its pleasures and its woes;  
So henceforth let man's friendly hand  
Guard well these wonders God hath planned,

And treat them as a sacred trust  
(For they ask not but what is just)  
And spare them from pollution where  
Their gracious fragrance fills the air —

Since only in the heavenly thought  
Were such ethereal marvels wrought: —  
Our souls, by sparing these frail things,  
Are lifted as by angel wings.

## MOUNT BLANC.

---



ETERNAL Mount, whose brow serene  
Rests pillowed on the clouds,  
half-seen,

What longing thy abode inspires  
In human hearts—what vast desires!

'Tis not decreed that mortal clod  
Should dwell on earth and still with God,  
But thou, reared from the lowly vale,  
Dost in supernal realms prevail.

And then, as if thou hadst a soul  
Pervading its celestial goal,  
Thou hast attained and wearest now,  
A spotless mantle for thy brow.

And He who did a promise give  
That man shall more than mortal live,  
Renews that emblem day by day,  
That it may never fade away.

Thus, hallowed Mount, from realms divine  
Thy coronet shall ever shine—  
A beacon, beaming far and wide,  
For weary, wayward feet a guide!

*Chamounix, Aug. 30th, 1873.*

TO JUSTIN S. MORRILL.

(A Senator of the United States from 1867 to 1899.)

ON HIS EIGHTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY,  
APRIL 14TH, 1893.



LIKE some o'ertowering forest oak that still  
Withstands the winds of four-score years  
and more,

While growths of younger years uprooted  
fall, —

Hoary with ripened leaf, but tried and strong

Thou standest waiting for those rapturous  
days

When blooming fields, kissed by the vernal  
sun,

With fragrant breath speak gratitude.

We hail thee now with fonder, firmer grasp,  
Thankful to Him who rules all destines,

That, well-nigh shivered by the furious blast <sup>1</sup>  
Which bent thee low and made all hearts  
despair,

Thou'rt left the stronger by the gale, and still  
Can with thy friends rejoice this natal day

To stand on earth though gazing into heaven!

And yet for worth and fame and all that makes  
Life grand and great, thou surely hast no  
need

To further go. Within the wondrous time  
Wherein thou led'st the panting legions on,

<sup>1</sup> A serious illness.



The fettered have been freed, and hushed the  
sounds

Of curséd war whose awful uproar once  
Convulsed the troubled land from sea to sea.

Saved is the State, and hostile cannon now  
Are molded into pyramids of peace!

The eager throngs that crowd our shores to join

The Nation's jubilee,<sup>2</sup> may marvel much  
Before the temple thou hast helped to rear

To law and justice long denied, and mark  
The mighty march of an enfranchised race  
Toward the blood-bought rights of men.

Old friend,  
Thy well-earned rest has come. A grateful State  
Whose every cause was served so long, so well,  
Withholds no added honor from thy name,  
But prays that thou shalt have forevermore  
The crowning peace thou hast for others won!

<sup>2</sup> World's Columbian Exposition in 1893.

## THE SERENADE.

---



THE smiling stars shine o'er my head,  
For now the longing day hath fled  
Whose hours seemed more than  
years to me  
Because they held me far from thee,—

From thee my sweet, my precious rose,  
Now lost in dreams and soft repose—  
In dreams of some far world of bliss,  
For thou wert made too pure for this.

An Ariel would I gladly be,  
And were I one I'd bear to thee  
The choicest flowers that bud and bloom  
To shed round thee their rare perfume.

I'd lure birds from their chosen climes  
To sing for thee their sweetest rhymes,  
For thy rare beauty would inspire  
Their raptured souls with such desire.

O wake and listen to my song—

That which hath pressed my heart so long—  
And thus assuage its throbbing pain  
Though passion's fire shall still remain!

But if thy slumbers thou shalt keep,

Of me I crave one thought may creep  
Into thy visions, pure and blest,  
And then content this heart can rest.

## CLARK AND THE OREGON.

---



THE Oregon at anchor lay, within the  
Golden Gate,

And far remote from surging  
waves—a thing inanimate—

When came an order, urgent, brief, to make  
for Callao,

And there await—for war might be—and with  
no dastard foe.

“All hands to anchor!” shouted Clark; then  
tugged each groaning chain,

And, ere the night, that battleship was plough-  
ing through the main.

And from that grave and anxious hour, for tid-  
ings still to learn,  
She rushing, left her foaming wake, for lengths  
and lengths astern;  
Along Pacific's coast she sped, as ship ne'er  
sped before,  
Led by the Southern Cross whose beam each  
wave in sequence bore.  
Callao reached, late orders read, at once for  
Rio sail,—  
Then on she swept, like mountain mist, before  
a raging gale.  
She leapt into Magellan's jaws—more dreaded  
than armed foes—  
And safe beyond their reefs and rocks, wild  
cheer on cheer arose.

What though Cervera's fleet were met? — what  
though in wait it lay? —

Such danger made her falter not, but eager for  
the fray. —

What though her sailors hungry went, and  
knew not sleep, nor rest,

If, yielding what they needed most would serve  
their country best?

The sturdy stokers, nigh outworn, still hotter  
made the fires,

And not a man, though parched with thirst,  
once stopped to quench desires.

The North Star struggled from afar to throw  
its potent ray —

That beacon which the brightest burns when  
lighting Freedom's way.

Toward its beam, through wind and wave, the  
battleship swept on,  
While Clark stood constant on the bridge and  
watched for lurking Don.  
At length, she entered Rio's port, where late  
dispatches bore  
News that the dogs of war were loosed and  
bayed along our shore.—  
Then like a meteor she swept on to join our  
fleet away  
At Santiago's armored gate, where it held Spain  
at bay.  
The engineers, unconscious grown, by stifling  
air, alack,  
When borne to deck and half restored, tried  
hard to stagger back;



And though this sovereign of the sea five thousand leagues had run,  
This paragon of battleships, as fresh as when begun,—  
With Clark at helm — with crew elate,— (this more than welcome guest) —  
Unhalting, pushed to Sampson's line, then proved herself his best.

That Sabbath morn had calmly dawned, and through the languid air  
Came far, faint sounds of convent bells that called to grateful prayer;  
But Oh! what crashing thunders break when now the foemen meet!—  
For look you there,—on swiftly comes Cervera's royal fleet—

Defiant, and with war-like mien, out through  
the narrow bay!  
All-desperate, they open fire and force the  
awful fray,  
But Sampson's roaring guns reply, "You're wel-  
come here, come on!"—  
And furies of a thousand hells are gathered  
here in one!  
Through smoke and fume the battle waged,  
and every shell we sent  
Was planted where it counted most, and where  
our gunners meant:—  
Then, leading all, the Oregon leapt foremost  
to the van,  
And raked and riddled with her shells, each  
deck that bore a man,—

While Clark forgot his conning-tower, where  
    danger was the least,  
And on his forward turret stood, where danger  
    never ceased.  
The Spainards read their tragic fate in their  
    doomed cruisers' light,  
And all aflame, dashed on the shore, and thus  
    gave up the fight.

Henceforth, on fame's eternal page, the Oregon  
    will shine,  
And Clark—that brave “Green-Mountain Boy”—  
    will be in every line,—  
That hill-born hero of the waves, whose name  
    revered will be,  
So long as valor has a place in annals of the  
    sea.

Elsewhere they vaunt their pedigrees, and boast  
of "royal blood,"  
But through *his* veins coursed "royal blood"  
not made by man, but God—  
The kind that captured old "Fort Ti.," and  
won at Bennington,  
Where grand old Stark the Hessians fought,  
until the sinking sun.  
While Clark and Dewey tread our decks—  
those peerless of our brave,—  
From every mast, on every breeze, "Old  
Glory" still shall wave!

## A MEMORY.

---



LOOKED upon such wondrous face,  
Such beauty, such surpassing  
grace,

Had ever artist once portrayed

The faultless features I surveyed,

He would thereby have won a name

Still absent from the page of fame.

While thus I gazed, intent, beguiled,  
The vision moved, and then it smiled,  
And o'er a harp flew two white hands  
Like mated swallows o'er the sands.  
Methought, what wondrous magic brings  
Such melting strains from those mute strings.—

Then Nature—not content to spare  
One gift or grace from her so fair—  
She sang. Such sweet and tender notes  
Could only come from angel throats;—  
A praising saint could not compare  
With sounds so touching and so rare.—

First came the warble of a bird; —

Then but a human voice was heard; —

Then some yet more impassioned strain

Infused my pulse and thrilled my brain.

As o'er the strand the billows roll,

This lapped and laved my raptured soul.

But vain, indeed, it were to ask

Of artist hand — unequal task —

To portray half the gifts divine

Embodied there in every line, —

For, had one sought by art to trace

The beauty of that matchless face,

The vision would have dazed the brain,

And moveless must that hand have lain.

## THE TESTY DEACON.

---



WAS down in the old Pine Tree  
state

Where chanced to pass what I  
relate, —

The land where pies and cakes abound,  
And Yankees at their best are found;

Where natives serve their pork and beans  
In methods fit for kings and queens,  
And where French gastronomic art  
Is not in vogue in any part.



'Twas in a rural farming town  
    (That never yet had won renown)  
Where dwelt a farmer — Ephraim Hale —  
    The subject of this woful tale.

Now “Deacon Eph” as he was called  
    Wore well his years, though long since bald,  
And seemed to lead a righteous life  
    Though mighty testy with his wife.

Long deacon in the village church  
    His goodly name had known no smirch;  
His neighbors all were proud that he  
    Should such a model neighbor be.

Now one grave fault the deacon had  
Which was a temper, always bad;  
And this he lashed with passion's whip  
And made it sting at every clip.

With Yankee thrift he money made  
By keeping geese that often strayed  
Unto his neighbor's very door  
And wrecked his garden o'er and o'er.

One day this neighbor—Moses Slade—  
Espied them, while in ambush laid—  
Each delving like a lusty Turk  
To ruin all his careful work.

He straightway ran and seized each goose  
And e're he turned the creature loose  
Slit through the web between its toes  
And made *one* foot just like a crow's.

In panic then they hustled all  
To get beyond the garden wall,  
And chose the shortest route for home  
Without desire to further roam.

They sought at once (by instinct led)  
The near-by pond where they were bred,  
And then proceeded, one by one,  
To navigate as they had done.

But lo! their calculations failed,  
And all aquatic ardor quailed  
When round and round their bodies spun,  
With not an inch of headway won.

When thus the deacon found his geese,  
His rage foretold a breach of peace;—  
He swore revenge on neighbor Slade  
Though he through blood should have  
to wade.

So, well disguised, the first dark night,  
He sought his neighbor's barn for spite,  
And seized the tail of his old mare  
And sheared it clean of every hair.

Then farmer Slade was wroth in turn,  
And for revenge his heart did burn;—  
He swore he'd "pickle old Hale's hide,  
And drive him from the church beside."

He sought a Justice of the Peace,  
And, (keeping mum about the geese,)  
In his complaint discreetly swore  
Of what occurred the night before.—

Therein he charged one Ephraim Hale,  
In legal terms—full of detail—  
With mutilating his old mare  
By shaving off her caudal hair.—

He further swore that the offense  
Arose from malice, called "prepnse,"  
And that such act did violate  
The peace and dignity of State.

He prayed the Justice there to grant  
A warrant for the miscreant,  
Which then was signed, with formal care,  
And with a grave, judicial air.

'Twas with much craft that farmer Slade  
On Saturday his charge had made,  
So that arrest should fall that night  
And thus make worse the deacon's plight.

Just at the hour of evening prayers  
Went forth the sheriff unawares  
To make arrest of deacon Hale  
And take him to the county jail.

The deacon answered his loud knock  
As struck the hour of nine o'clock  
And warmly bade him enter in  
As if he were his fondest kin.

The sheriff soon his mission told  
And then the warrant did unfold  
Which he read through in solemn tones  
Oft punctured by the deacon's groans.

Then Ephraim, who was much enraged,  
Tore like a tiger first encaged,  
And charged upon that viper, Slade,  
The outrage of this foul crusade.

Though "Mother Hale" for mercy plead,  
And grievous tears in plenty shed, —  
All proved to be of no avail  
To save her raving spouse from jail.

Full half that wretched night was o'er,  
When swung the jailor's ponderous door  
Through which the sheriff quickly passed  
Together with his charge, held fast.



The deacon still with anger burned,  
Yet meekly to the jailor turned,  
As if his mild and tender eye  
Betokened welcome sympathy.

“Tell me,” said he, “what can I do  
To make my hours here brief and few?”—  
“Until you’re tried, you must get bail,”  
The jailor said, “or stay in jail.”

“That will I do,” quoth Hale, “this night,  
And leave this den before day-light,  
Then to my church I’ll promptly go  
And no one of this plight shall know.”

“You can’t do that,” the jailor said,  
“For Justice lies asleep in bed;—  
Besides, the Sabbath’s now well on  
And that, in law, is *dies non*.”

The deacon never closed his eyes,  
But all that night tried to devise  
The means whereby he might get bail  
And flee far from that curséd jail.

That Sabbath day he gave to prayer,  
And thoughts of sacred things elsewhere;—  
His waiting home; his weeping wife,  
And church he’d missed not once through  
life.

When bail, at length, had been obtained  
And Ephraim had his freedom gained,  
His homeward journey he began —  
A wiser, though much sadder man.

But he, alas, in church and out,  
Had enemies who had no doubt  
That there was ample evidence  
To fix on him that grave offense.

A special meeting of the church  
Was called to instigate a search,  
And a committee chosen there  
Was sent to view the hapless mare.

They found, indeed, the ancient brute  
Bereft of caudal growth hirsute,  
But not one fact to prove, withal,  
Who plied the art tonsorial.

And so, their mission having failed,  
(A fact that most of them bewailed,)  
There seemed to be no earthly clue  
Which they with hope could then pursue.

But, while in vain they tried, each one,  
To learn by whom the deed was done,  
A tramp came sliding down the mow,  
Who told by whom, and when and how.—

He stated that on one dark night  
While in the barn, appeared a light,  
And that he "watched and saw old Hale  
With sheep-shears trim that hosses tail."

"He knew" he said, "that old cuss well,"  
And instances he then did tell,  
When from his watch-dogged house he'd fled  
While foraging for needful bread.

From what they thus had seen and heard  
Their pious souls were deeply stirred,  
And all agreed, with prompt accord,  
To put the guilty to the sword,—

For now the church was up in arms,  
And for just once omitted psalms;—  
Their model was in deep disgrace  
And in the church should have no place.

From office he was then deposed;  
His name was dropped; his pew was closed,  
And neighbor Slade, who owned the mare,  
Was chosen deacon then and there.

The lesson of this touching tale,  
While dearly bought by Ephraim Hale,  
Shows well how a few brainless geese  
A deacon taught to keep the peace!

## COLUMBIA.

---



GODDESS, stay thy threatening hand  
From alien hosts in that far land  
Whose voice now rends the pity-  
ing sky  
With plaintive cries for liberty!

The girdle 'neath thy throbbing breast  
Was forged from chains of those oppressed;  
The stripes upon thy stola — these  
Are blood-stains of thy votaries.

The spangled cap that crowns thy head  
Was placed there by the martyred dead,  
Who braved and bled and died in vain,  
If struggling Freedom shall not gain.

O, stretch thy helping arm to free  
The prostrate forms that kneel to thee,  
And give to men, unjustly blamed,  
The sacred rights thy birth proclaimed!

*January, 1899.*



## I THINK OF THEE.

---



THINK of thee when, dim and gray,  
Belated, drowsy night is roused,  
And loath to go, half-clad and slow,  
Recedes before advancing day.

I think of thee when anxious care  
Enslaves me through each labored hour;  
But toil were sweet, with joy replete,  
Could I for thee my burdens bear.

I think of thee with fonder heart,  
When day, commingling with the night,  
Prolongs his kiss of transient bliss  
Like lovers when enforced to part.

Then in my hours of deep repose  
On thee my craving dreams still feast,  
Yet when I wake, with hunger's ache,  
My yearning but intenser grows.

And thus my aching heart for thee  
Throbs on throughout each longing day, —  
In wild desire, a quenchless fire,  
Till smothered by eternity.

## THE WOODS.

---



AIN to the vaulted woods I go, where  
solitude doth reign,  
And seat me on some lichen'd rock,  
a brief surcease to gain  
From tumult of the maddening mart, where  
men contend for gold,  
And barter governs every thought, though lives  
be bought and sold.—

Here would I breathe the balsamed air, the  
freshness of the trees,  
And listen to the song of birds, and hum of  
gathering bees;  
Ah, here is peace, supernal peace, a paradise  
regained,  
Where man can soothe his troubled soul and  
feel himself enchained!

Here spread the hemlocks' feathery wings; here  
lift the stately pines;  
Here, whitened birches whiter seem, by ruddy,  
clinging vines;  
Here, too, the fruitful chestnuts tower, and in  
the lengthening year,  
With bursting burrs and shining nuts the  
scampering squirrels cheer.

On yonder spruce, now spectral grown, and  
aged with countless ills,  
The lone woodpecker urgent raps, then listens  
where he drills  
To hear the toiling insect stir, where strips of  
bark yet cling,  
Then pecks again till one is found, and flies  
on fleeter wing.

But hark! I hear the partridge drum, to call  
his absent mate;  
And then the silver-throated thrush his ecstacies  
relate;  
The veeries and the vireos make all the woods  
rejoice,  
And rapture comes when whip-poor-wills add  
their enchanting voice.

God made no earthly place like this, to lull  
sad weary souls,  
Where Nature's untrained orchestra beguiles and  
then consoles;  
And as I tread the beaten path, down life's de-  
cending hill,  
The transports of this sylvan spot will haunt  
and cheer me still!

## VERMONT.

---



HY very name doth symbolize

Thy verdant peaks that proudly  
rise,

As if to buttress with their might

The unpropped dome of heavenly light.

The beauty of thy matchless hills  
The ravished eye with rapture fills,  
While thy fair fields and fertile plains  
Bear flocks and herds and bounteous grains.

Thy Druid forests still conceal  
The eagles that high o'er them wheel,  
And shelter well the panting deer  
When driven from the open near.

Thy hillside homes and hamlets all  
Proclaim content and thrift withal;—  
No servile lines yet mark the face  
Of thy courageous, sturdy race.



Such land is thine, sons of thy birth,  
Whose sires, with blood, paid Freedom's  
worth;  
Who vanquished each invading foe  
And swept him back, or laid him low.

No trembling slave yet breathed thy air  
Whose shackles longer bound him there,  
For, by thy ancient Bill of Rights<sup>1</sup>  
All men stood equal on thy heights.

O happy land, thus early blessed,  
Where all were free and none oppressed,  
Thank well those sires whose master hand  
Built from thy rock and not thy sand!

<sup>1</sup> Vermont was the first of the States to prohibit Slavery by Constitutional Convention, viz., July, 1777.

## THE RETURN.

---



FROM childhood's village, years away,  
I once more trod its lonely street,  
The morning of a summer's day,  
Nor saw one face to know and greet.

I crossed the bridge where once the stream  
Ran dark and deep and hurriedly,  
But now I saw — how like a dream —  
Its waters ripple languidly.

I saw, near by, the school-house, where  
In torments of captivity,  
Full many a day, imprisoned there,  
Was to me an eternity.

But where my school-mates, at their task,  
Were daily gathered, half the year,  
Desertion stared and seemed to ask:—  
“What stranger is now sauntering here?”

Hard by, the "meeting-house" still stood  
Where, in my boyhood, old and young  
Met in one common brotherhood  
To worship God with reverent tongue.

How memory now brought in review  
My childhood friends once gathered there;  
The gray, now gone; the young I knew,  
Themselves now gray with years and care.

Methought, alas, how many score  
Had, in their last majestic state,  
Been brought from out its ample door  
To pass, since then, yon church-yard gate.

I entered there among the dead;  
Then slowly strolled past chiseled stones,  
And here, anon, I paused and read  
The fond names of remembered ones.

Such caravan of years had passed  
Since I this grass-grown path had trod,—  
'Twas now a marbled city vast,  
Of those whose souls repose with God.

With heavy heart, I wandered on  
Through neighboring aisles still narrower,  
Until, at last, I came upon  
The hallowed spot where kindred were.

And standing, with its lines severe,  
    Their marble monolith I viewed,—  
Pure as an angel's frozen tear,—  
    Fit emblem of their lives renewed.

But Nature comforts my sad heart,—  
    For her enduring smiles here rest,—  
Where buds and blossoms fain impart  
    A fragrance that seems hallowed, blest;

Where suns first kiss the breast of Spring,  
    And birds are lured from chosen ways,  
And, resting here their weary wing,  
    Outpour their sweetest roundelays;—

Where blossoms hid amongst the bowers  
Are sought by humming birds and bees,  
Who bring their sweets from distant flowers  
To dwell enraptured here with these.

And as o'er tides I'm swept along  
To wakeless dreams on sightless shore,  
My benediction would prolong  
Peace to their dust, forevermore!

## THE ALCHEMIST.

---



HAT peerless Alchemist, the heart,  
Transcending the magician's art,  
Imbues each tear, by passion  
wrought,  
With distillations of our thought.

And hence emotion's laden tear  
Knows more than wisest sage or seer  
Or oceans vast, that ebb and flow,  
Of human joy and human woe.



## CHILDHOOD'S DREAM.

---



H, blesséd was that childhood day,  
When with sweet Alice, blithe  
and gay,

I tripped adown the country lane,  
Her hand in mine — her gallant swain.

O, she was more than Saxon fair  
With sunbeams nestled in her hair,  
While from her gladsome, heaven-blue eyes  
One caught the gleams of paradise.

Her lips were like two rubies set  
With pearls between—I see them yet—  
As when she, blushing, to me said,  
“I love you, if you love me, Ned.”

I answered in no doubting way,  
Down in the lane that joyful day;  
And thence our two hearts beat as one  
And few were hours they beat alone.

No darkening shadow, cloud or mist  
Pervaded that secluded tryst,  
But every sun shone full and fair  
And taught its rays to linger there.

Life then was one sweet reverie;  
Its rhythm one fond melody;  
That melody one gentle voice  
Whose accents bade my heart rejoice.

But lo! what grief soon pierced my heart  
And sent its pang to every part  
When illness came, and Alice died,  
And wondering angels turned and sighed.

And since that day, how vainly I  
Have tried to solve life's mystery,—  
To understand why buds that bloom  
Should, ere their fruitage, reach their  
doom;—

Why childhood, fresh and fair and pure  
Should be the one for death to lure,  
While age is left to totter through  
Still other years, concealed from view.

Life's noon had passed, ere once again  
I wandered through that hallowed lane,  
And lo, how changed!—few signs it bore  
That I had trod its path before.

I sought that humble cottage near,  
Which through my childhood was so dear,  
But found it not; where once it stood  
Were tangled weeds and blackened wood.

With saddened heart I turned to go,  
But spied, hard by, a headstone low,  
Whereat I paused, and through my tears,  
Read — “Here lies Alice: aged ten years.”

## THE AWAKENING.

---



Length the mystic touch of Spring  
Awakes the slumbering forms of  
earth,

When Nature spreads her warming wing,  
And blesses all with glad rebirth.

Her breath infuses every breeze  
With odors and perfumes divine,  
Drawn from the blossomed apple trees  
And every fragrant bud and vine.

Now robins sing their sweetest song—  
And bobolinks and orioles,—  
Sweetest because suppressed so long  
It bursts from out their brimming souls.

Now comes the chirp of building birds;  
The noisy caw of watchful crows;  
While from the hill-side's browsing herds  
The distant cow-bell's tinkle flows.

The blackbirds from the willows cry;  
The plover pipes in yonder bogs,  
And from the stagnant pool, hard by,  
Rise amorous murmurings of the frogs.

Such mingled sweets and rhapsodies  
Soothe every sense with anodynes;—  
In vain I strive, through languor's eyes,  
To comprehend God's vast designs!



## THE FINAL VOYAGE.

---



HE night was starless, bleak and  
drear,

And through the rigging one  
could hear

The wild winds blowing, bearing moans

Discordant to the ear, and groans

Of ship, now tossed from side to side,

As on she trembled o'er the tide.

Yet plunged she through the stormy way,  
With throes that brought but pale dismay  
To stalwart hearts, appalled by fear,  
That sent to cheeks the anxious tear  
Lest kindred on a distant shore,  
Might wait, alas, forevermore.

Beneath the deck's low, creaking beam,  
In calm repose and joyful dream,  
An aged mother, lone and ill,  
Throughout the tempest slumbered still,  
Whose lamp of life, with fading ray,  
Foretold her near and final day.

Long widowed, she had lived through toil  
On distant Scotland's storied soil;  
For, one by one, at man's estate,  
Their pulses strong, their hearts elate,  
Her sons had sought far western shores  
Where Plenty stood at opened doors.

And thus, with all life's sunshine lost,  
Time touched her with its wilting frost;  
Then years grew long, and dark the way,  
Like shadows at departing day,  
And fondest of her dreams were fain  
To clasp and kiss her boys again.

Through night and storm and troubled sea  
    She slumbered on in ecstasy,  
Still dreaming of her darling boys  
    And future years of waiting joys;—  
But ere the cloud-swept sun arose  
    Her soul had fled from all its woes.

That morn so bright, in steerage lay—  
    Its spirit fled—the mortal clay;  
And soon the sailors' heavy tread  
    Bore to the deck the humble dead,  
In canvas shroud, with cordage bound,  
    While wailing sea-gulls hovered round.

Then near the dead and yet along,  
There huddled sailors, mute and strong,  
Who lowered down the vessel's side  
That muffled form to waters wide,  
Which sank beneath the wave's embrace,  
Whose sepulchre no kin can trace.

For her no tolling bell was heard,  
Nor sob, nor sigh, nor spoken word;  
But memories yet will toll a knell  
In hearts that still remember well  
Their slumbers soft, and blissful rest,  
Upon that mother's loving breast.

## UNDAUNTED.

---



DAY, lingering at the western door,  
Looks back, with taper in his  
hand,  
And dimly lights the purple floor,  
Whereon approaching Night will stand.

Throughout the heaven's boundless height  
    Hang twilight's lamps now burning low,  
But as they spy the goddess, Night,  
    They greet her with their brightest glow.

She, stealing from her hidden bowers —  
    Her faithful service to maintain —  
Patrols the dark and lonely hours,  
    To guard, in turn, Day's vast domain.

Together, they, like sentinels,  
    Have paced through centuries that were,  
Which, huddled in their mouldy cells,  
    Repose in Time's vast sepulchre.

Since parting at primeval dawn —  
    When last he saw her beauteous face —  
Day has pursued this nimble fawn  
    With yearning heart and eager pace.

Unwearied by his futile chase;  
    Undaunted, too, by cruel fate,  
Yet yearning for one fond embrace,  
    Each morn he bursts the Orient gate.

His passion now resistless grown,  
    He throws his arms from roseate bowers;  
But timid Night, alert, has flown,  
    And left her tears upon the flowers.



## ACROSS THE STREET.

---



o club-house "swells" who crowd,  
*en masse*,

To stare at maidens as they  
pass, —

On that vain throng, just out of bed,

Which turns its eyes, but not its head, —

For adoration decked, arrayed,

In "stunning" clothes, all "ready-made;" —

A scene like this, to dudish eyes,

Is like a glimpse of paradise.

But now and then a clubless man  
    May have his day Elysian,  
For, as he homeward plods at night,  
    There may from off the car alight  
(Just at the corner where he dwells)  
    Some Aphrodite who excels  
The Grecian goddess in the grace  
    And beauty of her classic face:—  
And then, (since luck has turned his way,)  
    May learn, perchance, the following day  
That this rare maid lives in the *suite*  
    That faces his, across the street;—  
A creature far more shy than bold;  
    With glowing cheeks and hair of gold;  
Whose eyes have stole the skies' own blue;  
    Whose lips would pale the poppy's hue;  
Whose form so luscious, ripe and rare,  
    'Twould seem to charm the very air  
Through which she moves, with faultless grace,  
    To hide, at times, her roguish face.—

Yes, once I met a celibate  
Who vouched for what I thus relate.  
He proved to be that very man—  
(The one without a club or clan,)  
Who then proceeded to narrate  
The outcome of his harrowing fate:—

“From out my window, hour by hour,  
I once watched Nature’s fairest flower.  
She smiled in most bewitching ways,  
And each month flirted thirty days  
Most ardently, yet so reserved,  
That had bread been thus scantily served,  
I starved each day while lingering yet  
To gaze upon this rare coquette.”

“So while this maid, in that coy way,  
Thus tortured me from day to day,  
I realized how very fine  
Grandmother Prude had drawn the line

Permitting, say, a hundred smiles,  
But kept us dumb as two gargoyles."

"But science, ah, that brought relief,  
Just when I might have come to grief.  
I therefore bought a telephone —  
Which lovers' service oft had done —  
(Since Madame Grundy's stern decree  
O'erlooked this form of ecstasy,)  
Then drank the nectar, sip by sip,  
In accents from her honied lip,  
Until my brain took wings and flew  
To realms whereof it never knew,  
Where sweet communion was ordained  
And more than former joys attained,  
'Till, Icarous-like, the heated wires  
Were melted by our ardent fires;  
And when, in haste and unawares,  
I dropped to earth to make repairs,  
This charmer stood, at her front door,  
*Coquetting with my janitor!*"

## TO MARJORIE.

(A DÉBUTANTE)

---



MARJORIE, with brow so fair, and  
heart so chaste and pure,  
The world adoring thee beholds  
thy fit investiture;

For now, in queenly robes thou standst, a bride  
to coming years,

As smiling Future beckons thee, while stands  
the Past in tears.

O goddess of the present, thou! O vision of  
the morrow!

Thy younger comrades bid adieu with heavy  
heart and sorrow.

L. of C.

May every fond, enchanting dream of child-  
hood's happy hour,  
Bring forth its glad reality, and every bud its  
flower.  
But as life's pathway thou dost tread, and up  
its steeps dost climb,  
Choose for thy comrades Charity, and Hope  
and Faith sublime;—  
Then thou hast taught humanity how justly  
thou hast earned,  
The heavenly radiance from above, that on thy  
head is turned.

## THE PRODIGAL.

---



Why should man loiter by the way —  
A vagrant through each golden  
day?

And why should he so weary grow  
With countless blessings here below?  
And why complain that he should share  
Such burdens as his fellows bear,  
And live but for life's joys alone,  
Nor grateful be, for every one?

The mighty oak's concentric ring  
Counts well each oft-recurring Spring;—  
The sands when dropping from the glass  
Hold back the seconds as they pass;—  
The time-worn clock in yonder tower  
Reluctant tolls each passing hour,  
And nought but man, by reckless haste,  
Permits one precious hour to waste,  
Nor like a spendthrift, seeks to borrow  
For use to-day, hours of the morrow.  
Will such a squanderer ever learn  
His lamp of life to wisely burn,  
So that the oil shall feed its ray  
To light his feet at close of day!









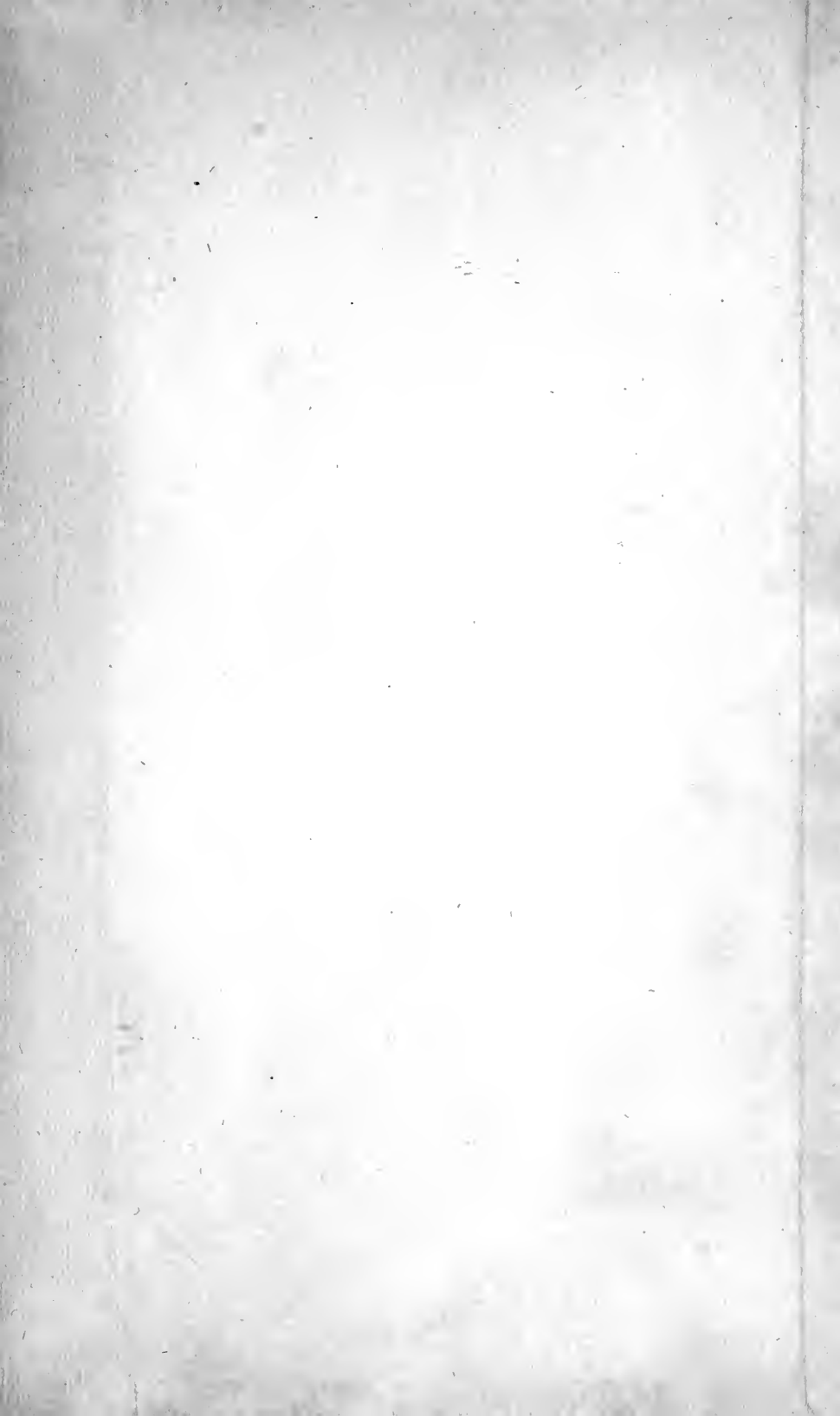
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